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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTE

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Czechoslovakia Prepares to Normalize Relations with FRG

On July 15, Czechoslovakia's bicameral parliament will meet in plenary session to ratify a normalization treaty with the Federal Republic of Germany. The treaty has been pending since last December, when Czechoslovak and West German heads-of-state initialed it. Conservative opposition in West Germany, most effective in the Bundesrat, delayed Bonn's ratification until July 10.

The ratified treaty is one reflection of former Chancellor Brandt's Ostpolitik. It normalizes diplomatic relations between the FRG and Czechoslovakia and annuls the repugnant Munich Pact of 1938. Although the treaty deftly dodges the legal status of West Berlin, a major stumbling block for German ratification, it does provide for West German representation of West Berlin residents in consular matters. Courts and other legal institutions, however, are not covered.

Prague's interest in normalizing relations with Bonn has consistently centered on confirming postwar borders and burying the hated "Munich Diktat." Economic relations will be little effected since West Germany is already Prague's major western economic partner.

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